

## Minutes of George E. Wahlen Ogden Veterans' Home Advisory Board Meeting 4-29-10

Meeting was called to order at 1600 hours by Bob Jones the Advisory Board Chair. The following individuals were in attendance:

Terry Schow, Executive Director Utah Department of Veterans' Affairs  
Dennis McFall  
John Haycock, Resident Representative  
Bob Ramos  
Casey Kunimura  
Norm Nelson  
Fasi Filiaga  
Bob Jones  
Dennis Howland  
James Kopecky  
Ralph Coleman  
Jerry Taylor  
Judy Lemmons  
Kim Wixon, State Officer, Staff to the Advisory Board  
Kelly Snowball, Nursing Home Administrator, Avalon  
Lance Hassel, Avalon

Belinda Karabatsos (801.584.1241 X2) was unable to attend due to inclement weather. Kim Wixon will invite her to attend the May meeting. Dr. Earl was excused. Steve Young has tendered his resignation due to possible conflict of interests with his position at the VAMC.

### **State Officer Report:**

The VA recognition survey was passed on March 18<sup>th</sup>. No tags were sited. However, on-the-spot corrections were allowed and taken advantage of by the staff. Kim congratulated AVALON for their accomplishment and thanked them for their hard work.

Audio-Visual Equipment for the multi-purpose room. Kim reported on the state contract and the bids received from General Communications. The low bid was \$35,000. We are going to reevaluate the needs and determine a better process to equip the multi-purpose room.

### **Scout Projects.**

Flag project for lobby is progressing well and should be installed prior to the next board meeting.

Bird feeders are still being worked on but should be up prior to the next board meeting.

Possible scout project to inventory and catalogue the libraries is in the works.

Frank Maughn has a scout project to plant trees around the emergency generator to improve the view and act as a sound block. Terry requested this be evaluated to insure the trees do not cause any access problems for the generator. Kim explained that the trees were more to shield the generator and should be planted far enough away as to not cause a problem with access.

Fishing gear kit is being proposed by one scout where he would outfit a number of fishing gear kits and then take the Veterans on a fishing trip.

A request was made to change the uniform in the display cabinet. The Marine uniform is decorated with a Navy Good Conduct Medal. All help will be gratefully accepted to improve the display areas.

Kelly Snowball mentioned a plan to put a full uniform at each of the different services. A suggestion was made to change them out during the birthday month of each service.

Bob Jones then turned time over to Kelly Snowball for the Avalon report.

**Avalon Report:**

Kelly reported that as of April 28<sup>th</sup> there are 55 veterans and veterans' spouses. 12 Medicare, 3 Medicaid, 5 veterans with 70% Service Connected Disability and 35 Private Pay. A clarification was requested on what private pay meant. Kelly explained that private pay meant the veteran or spouse was responsible for the \$2291 per month payment. Kim explained this was for a 30 day month; there is a \$76 charge for each day. Eight spouses are currently in the home. Twenty-five percent of the census can be non-veterans. We are currently at about 15%. There are three couples here the other spouses are surviving spouses of veterans.

We have had 40 admissions since the last board meeting. Under VA regulations, each veteran must be seen within 72 hours of admission. This causes difficulties scheduling the doctors and admissions to meet all regulations.

Eight veterans have been discharged. Three veterans have been returned to home after completion of therapy. One veteran was transferred to the SLVH. Clarification was given on the availability for veterans and veterans' spouses to stay at the Veterans' Home after a hospital stay to go through rehabilitation. The rehabilitation services here are outstanding and available. This has been a very successful program. A question was asked if there were any problems related to scheduling Medicare patients. While there are coordination problems, it is a good service and benefit to the Veterans and well worth the coordination.

Three veterans have passed away. A request was made to have the board notified of any veterans passing away. This was later determined to be in violation of HIPPA rules and will therefore not be done.

A question was asked on the availability of respite care. Respite care is available and we are expecting our first admissions next week. There are no restrictions on the length of stay for respite. The same requirements are needed for admission for respite care. The cost is also the same \$76.53 per day. A question was asked if we are marketing this service. Kelly reported that Avalon has paid for a great amount of advertising in newspaper, radio and other. A great amount of the marketing is coming from word of mouth of the families that have family members here. Kelly went on to say the staff does not want to be just a nursing home, rather they want the veterans to look at this as their home and to provide the veterans with services they cannot find elsewhere.

The census should be in the sixties by the end of the May. Dennis advised the board that we are licensed to be a skilled nursing care facility. Being a skilled nursing care facility we can serve skilled nursing care and below. Only acute care is not available.

Clinical information: 49 falls, 13 residents have accounted for the falls, 7 of the residents have had two or more falls. Falls are a big issue, we have seen some residents have gained strength through therapy and have attempted to stand or move without assistance before they are actually ready. No significant injuries occurred from these falls. A question was asked on the average age. Kelly estimated the average to be mid eighties.

Dietary concerns are continually monitored. We have had three residents with an unplanned weight loss. A significant weight loss is a 5% loss of total body weight in a thirty day time frame. A number of interventions are available.

Infections are another serious issue. We have had no significant infections in the Veterans' Home.

No sentinel events. A sentinel event is any event that causes death, serious injury, fractures, or loss of limb or movement. No in-house pressure ulcers have developed. Skin checks, diet and care are very successful in combating pressure ulcers.

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Staffing. 77 employees compared to 35 at the last meeting. Kelly Snowball explained the vetting process used for hiring employees.

7 employees are veterans, 3 are family members, one employee is the widow of an Air Force pilot, and two children of the employees are currently serving in a combat zone. 23% of the staff is veterans or family of veterans.

When fully staffed the VeteransqHome will employ approximately 130 employees.

We have one intern from Weber State University in Social Work. She is the wife of a veteran.

The current ratio of staff to resident in the memory care community is nearly one to one. Kelly went on to explain the staff ratio is high due to having to hire and train staff ahead of admitting residents.

A request was made to facilitate board members being able to give correct phone numbers to the public. Kelly Snowball agreed to make laminated cards for the board to pass out.

Kelly Snowball reviewed the financial report. A discussion of the \$230,000 start up funds contributed by the State explained how the VeteransqHome was able to maintain operations with no to little income. A large portion of the initial costs went to building up inventories of expendables and equipment.

A discussion of Medicaid, Medicare and 70% and higher Service Connected Disabilities residents was held. The use of these options is good for the VeteransqHome. Changes are coming that we need to be aware of and plan for in the future.

John Alou was asked to be excused as his son in the Military was injured in a vehicle accident in Mississippi.

### **New Business.**

A question was asked about signs on the Interstate directing people to the VeteransqHome. Terry explained the hesitancy of UDOT in putting up signs, especially the cost of the signs. We will ask again to see if this can be done. Terry asked the board to write a letter to him requesting signs be installed.

Dennis McFall discussed the question of admitting non-residents to the OVH. A recommendation was made to make the policy the same as that at the Salt Lake VeteransqHome. This board makes the recommendation to the Executive Director who then makes the policy and forwards it to Avalon for inclusion in its policies. This motion was tabled until the next meeting.

Next meeting is May 27<sup>th</sup> at 1600 hours.

### **Executive Committee Meeting**

The minutes of the March 13, 2010 meeting were approved.

The board members were instructed to fill out the oath of office form and send into the Governor's Office.

A discussion was held on a mission and vision statements. Kim Wixon explained that there had been a request from a member of the board to set up a mission and vision statement. Bob Jones stated that he would send out copies to the board. A request was made to locate other VeteransqHome mission statements and use them as an example.

Steve Young resigned from the board due to possible conflicts of interest with his position at the VAMC. Terry explained that this is still being worked on for a replacement.

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Kim reported that the restricted funds were attached to the agenda. There still is no money in the hold back funds as we still have not received the official approval from the VA.

Bob Ramos requested that a fence be built around the front of the property. It is not meant to be a security fence but just a plastic picket fence to improve the looks of the front of the property. Kim will report on the costs at the next meeting.

Non-restricted funds for the veterans are funds that can be used by the veterans for any purpose the Residents Council approves. Last month the balance of this account was \$3,124.00. No new donations were received this month. The veterans decided to purchase food items for the nature center on 12<sup>th</sup> street as a way of giving back to the community. The cost of the food items was \$106.99. The new balance is \$3017.01. John Haycock expressed his feelings that this was a good process.

Restricted funds for the veterans are funds that are directly focused on purchasing a specific item. WalMart donated \$500 toward the purchase of a \$698 flat screen TV. Two members of the Advisory Committee donated the remaining money. Kim stated the TV will be purchased next week.

A question was asked on how non-restricted funds are spent. The Resident Council has complete authority over the disbursement of these funds.

Bob Jones announced that the Sons of the American Legion donated a BBQ grill. There is still a need for two more grills for the Air Force and Coast Guard communities. The objective is to have one for each community.

### **OPEN DISCUSSION**

A clarification was asked as to where donations to the Tribute Tower should be sent. Terry stated that these donations should go to the main UVA office in Salt Lake.

A request was made that when discussing the VeteransqHome we use the term %Our team+ The VeteransqHome does not belong to any one person, therefore it should be thought of as a combined %Our+.

Golf Tournament was discussed. We are short on teams, prizes and sponsors. People do not need to be veterans in order to play in the tournament. People now need to be escorted rather than just a letter to permit entry. UVA will place personnel at the South Gate to sponsor personnel on the base. 0700 . 0800 is registration and continental breakfast.

Terry Schow advised the board of many tours being conducted at the home. Bob Jones indicated that we needed a needs list to be posted for tours. Kim discussed the Freedom Festival event on July 2, 3 and 5. The Freedom Festival normally does not give allowances to group like this, but have made an exception for the VeteransqHome. Funds for the Tribute Tower will be requested. Terry mentioned that we have a trailer to move the bell to different events. Ralph Coleman and Terry will request the graphics to be placed on the trailer. Judy Lemmons suggested that the parade should be utilized to get donations.

A request was made to have the bell at the Brigham City Cemetery for Memorial Day at 1030.

The meeting was adjourned at 5 p.m.